

Washington, DC B Rep. Peter DeFazio today voted for passage of H.R. 2881, the FAA Reauthorization Act, legislation which will modernize the nation's aging air traffic control system, help reduce our congested airways, improve passenger safety and improve security at foreign repair stations. DeFazio is a senior member of the House Aviation Subcommittee. The bill passed by a vote of 267-151.

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“The aviation industry is a cornerstone of our economy counting for 12 percent of our gross domestic product. The investments included in this bill will provide for vital improvements and upgrades that will help regenerate this struggling industry, stimulate local economies and anticipate future demand,” DeFazio said. “The administration proposed a fee structure aimed at the heart of general aviation and, ironically, would have decreased the amount of funding available for an already over-congested and over-burdened air system. This bill will get us the needed investments to deal with congestion and the next generation of air traffic control, allow us to partner with airports to deal with their needs through an increase in the passenger facility charge, includes critical considerations for the people who keep us alive -- the air traffic controllers -- who are being demeaned by petty work rules and having their compensation cut, and provides long-overdue improvements in cabin air quality.”

“Consumers experienced record airline delays this summer, clearly we can do better in the United States of America,” DeFazio continued. Air traffic is expected to triple by 2025. This bill includes \$18 billion for new runways, runway extensions, taxiways, and apron construction to help increase the ease of passengers and cargo getting through airports and onto their destinations on time. The bill also includes \$13 billion for the FAA to upgrade and modernize the aging air traffic control system which will help improve efficiency and safety for the flying public.

The bill also includes important consumer protection provisions which DeFazio pushed for. The bill mandates that the Department of Transportation increase the amount of compensation airlines must pay passengers when they are bumped from a flight. That amount hasn't been adjusted in almost thirty years. The bill would create an 800 number for aviation consumer

complaints and require the FAA to publicize it so consumers can actually use it. The bill mandates a study comparing the European Union's passenger compensation regulations to those in the U.S. The EU is light years ahead of the US in passenger protections in cases of overbooked, cancelled or delayed flights. The bill also includes long-overdue improvements in cabin air quality which has been linked to a variety of health and safety concerns.

Finally, the bill includes an important provision allowing for more flights between Washington National Airport (DCA) and the West Coast. Getting direct service between DCA and Oregon is a top priority for Rep. DeFazio.

The bill now will move to the Senate for consideration.